

**BY ORDER OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

AIR FORCE INSTRUCTION 36-2023

3 APRIL 2018



Personnel

**THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
PERSONNEL COUNCIL (SAFPC)**

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ACCESSIBILITY: Publications and forms are available for downloading or ordering on the e-Publishing website at www.e-publishing.af.mil

RELEASABILITY: There are no releasability restrictions on this publication.

OPR: SAF/MRBP

Certified by: SAF/MR
(Mr. Daniel R. Sitterly)

Supersedes: AFI36-2023, 8 March 2007

Pages: 10

This instruction implements DoDD 1332.41, *Boards for Correction of Military Records (BCMRs) and Discharge Review Boards (DRBs)*, AFD 36-25, *Military Promotion and Demotion*, AFD 36-28, *Awards and Decorations Programs*, AFD 36-32, *Military Retirements and Separations*, Air Force Mission Directive 43, *Air Force Review Boards Agency*, and Headquarters Air Force Mission Directive 1-24, *Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)*. It describes the composition and functions of the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council, including the authority of Special Assistants appointed by the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Director. It also identifies Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council component boards and describes their composition and functions. This instruction applies to Regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard personnel. This instruction may be supplemented at any level; all MAJCOM-level supplements must be approved by the Human Resource Management Strategic Board prior to certification and approval in accordance with AFI 36-8101, *Total Force Human Resource Management (HRM) Domain Governance*. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) in the Air Force Records Information Management System (AFRIMS). Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility using the AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route AF Forms 847 from the field through the appropriate functional chain of command.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This document has been substantially revised and needs to be completely reviewed.

1. Roles and Responsibilities.

1.1. Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MR).

1.1.1. The Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs serves as an agent of the Secretary of the Air Force and provides guidance, direction, and oversight for all matters pertaining to military and civilian personnel policy.

1.2. Director, Air Force Review Boards Agency (SAF/MRB).

1.2.1. The Director, Air Force Review Boards Agency, acting on behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force and Secretary of Defense, conducts boards and panels to make decisions and recommendations for warfighters, civilians, veterans, and their families, ensuring fairness, equity, justice, and due process.

1.3. Director, Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council (SAF/MRBP).

1.3.1. The Director, Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council, acts for and makes recommendations on military personnel matters to the Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF) or the Secretary's designee.

2. The Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council.

2.1. Overview. The Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council is a quasi-judicial organization within the Air Force Review Boards Agency (AFRBA), organized under the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MR).

2.2. Function. The Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council is responsible for managing and operating three component boards: the Air Force Personnel Board, the Air Force Discharge Review Board, and the Air Force Decorations Board.

2.3. Composition. The Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council is composed of Regular Air Force (RegAF), Air Force Reserve (AFR), and Air National Guard (ANG) commissioned officers, senior noncommissioned officers (SNCOs), contractors, and Government Service civilians. Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council leadership consists of a Director (O-6) and at least one Deputy Director (GS-15 and/or O-6). The Air Force Review Boards Agency Director (SAF/MRB) appoints board members on special orders to serve on each of the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council's three component boards. Board membership is comprised of permanent party and attached Air Force Review Boards Agency personnel and supplemental collateral members from the following specialties:

2.3.1. Legal Advisors. Legal Advisors may be military or Government Service civilian attorneys, and can also serve as analysts and/or board members. Legal Advisors provide advice on questions of law, regulation, and policy. For issues of first impression or issues for which there are conflicting legal opinions, Legal Advisors may consult with staff from the Secretary of the Air Force Office of the General Counsel (SAF/GC), the Office of the Judge Advocate General Administrative Law Directorate (AF/JAA), the Office of the Chief Counsel, National Guard Bureau (NGB/JA), and other agencies as necessary.

2.3.2. Medical Advisors. Medical Advisors may be military or Government Service civilian healthcare providers, and can also serve as analysts and/or board members. Medical Advisors provide advice on medical issues, including, but not limited to, fitness for duty, disability ratings, disability evaluation/levels of disability, and the impact of medical conditions on performance of duty and/or misconduct. Medical Advisors also provide advice on medical policy and regulations. For additional information or guidance, Medical Advisors may consult with medical professionals from the Air Force Medical Operations Agency (AFMOA), the Air Force Medical Support Agency (AFMSA), or other agencies as necessary. Contractors may also serve as analysts.

2.3.3. Personnel Advisors. Personnel Advisors may be military (commissioned officers or SNCOs) members or Government Service civilians with a background in military personnel policy. Personnel Advisors may also serve as analysts and/or board members. SNCOs may serve as analysts, but can only be voting board members on certain types of cases. Personnel Advisors provide advice on questions of military personnel policy and programs. For additional information or guidance on specific issues, Personnel Advisors may consult with Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower, Personnel, and Services (AF/A1) staff, Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) staff, Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC) staff, National Guard Bureau (NGB) staff, Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) staff, and other agencies as necessary. Contractors may also serve as analysts.

2.3.4. Air Force Reserve Advisors. Air Force Reserve Advisors are commissioned officers or Government Service civilian personnel in the Air Force Reserve who can also serve as presiding officials, analysts, and/or board members. Air Force Reserve Advisors provide advice on policies and programs pertaining to the Air Force Reserve. For additional information or guidance on particular issues, Air Force Reserve Advisors may consult with Chief, Air Force Reserve (AF/RE) staff; Headquarters, Air Force Reserve Command (HQ AFRC) staff; Air Reserve Personnel Center staff; and other agencies as necessary.

2.3.5. Air National Guard Advisors. Air National Guard Advisors are commissioned officers or Government Service civilian personnel in the Air National Guard who can also serve as presiding officials, analysts, and/or board members. Air National Guard Advisors provide advice on questions of policies and programs pertaining to Air National Guard members. For additional information or guidance on particular issues, Air National Guard Advisors may consult with the National Guard Bureau, Air Reserve Personnel Center, and other agencies as necessary.

2.3.6. Advisors may act simultaneously in one or more of the roles outlined in paragraphs 1.3.1. through 1.3.5. When doing so, advisors must ensure overlapping roles do not compromise the impartiality, or the appearance of impartiality, of any board action.

2.3.7. Collateral Members. In order to supplement Air Force Review Boards Agency permanent party voting members and provide a broader diversity of functional expertise, collateral board members may serve on component boards at the request of the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Director and with the concurrence of their chain of command. They may be military or Government Service civilian personnel; the former

should normally be field grade officers or SNCOs and the latter should normally hold the grade of GS-14/15.

2.3.8. All panel members are expected to apprise the panel president of any issues that arise warranting their recusal or any matters that would create an appearance of a conflict of interest.

2.3.9. Special Assistants. The Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Director may appoint Special Assistants within agencies such as the Air Force Personnel Center and the Air Reserve Personnel Center to take specific actions, including but not limited to, actions on separations and retirements, enlisted grade determinations, recoupments, physical disability actions, and waivers of active duty service commitments, as set forth in appointment and delegation memoranda.

3. Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Component Boards. The Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council has three component boards: the Air Force Personnel Board, the Air Force Discharge Review Board, and the Air Force Decorations Board. Note: AFI 51-602, *Boards of Officers*, does not apply to these component boards.

3.1. Air Force Personnel Board.

3.1.1. Authority. The Air Force Personnel Board reviews and makes recommendations on personnel matters, under the provisions set forth in Department of Defense or Air Force guidance, including Air Force Mission Directive 43, *Air Force Review Boards Agency*, and by authority delegated under Headquarters Air Force Mission Directive 1-24, *Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)*. Unless authority has been otherwise reserved to or withdrawn by the Secretary of the Air Force, Under Secretary of the Air Force, or SAF/MR, the Air Force Review Boards Agency Director or the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Director and the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Deputy Director(s) may act on recommendations of the Air Force Personnel Board. The authority of the Board is set forth in the governing statutes and instructions applicable to the underlying personnel action or as provided in Secretarial delegations and policy memoranda. Air Force Personnel Board consideration is not required for all cases. The Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Director and Deputy Director(s) have authority to decide certain types of cases on behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force without the Board's consideration in accordance with Headquarters Air Force Mission Directive 1-24 and/or the applicable prescribing statute, directive, instruction, or delegation memorandum. The Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Director or Deputy Director(s) may refer a case to the Board for consideration even if its consideration is not required by statute or regulation. A complete list of pertinent statutes and instructions can be found in the attachment to this AFI.

3.1.2. Composition. Three members constitute a quorum for Air Force Personnel Board cases where board action is required. The voting membership may be expanded to five, depending on the type and nature of the case and in conjunction with policies established by the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Director.

3.1.2.1. Where practical:

3.1.2.1.1. A majority of voting panel members shall be equal to, or higher in grade, or civilian equivalent, to the applicant or respondent in each case.

3.1.2.1.2. For cases involving RegAF Airmen, the quorum shall include a RegAF member.

3.1.2.1.3. For cases involving Air Reserve Component Airmen, the quorum shall include an Air Reserve Component representative (military or Government Service civilian), with the intent of ensuring specific component representation when possible.

3.1.2.1.4. For cases involving the collateral consequences of United States Air Force Academy cadet disenrollment, the panel's voting membership shall include a SNCO and a field grade officer who is an Air Force Academy graduate.

3.1.2.2. For physical disability evaluations or regular Air Force appointments of medical corps officers, dental officers, nurses, and medical specialists, the quorum must include a medical corps officer or Government Service civilian equivalent.

3.1.3. Board Actions/Responsibilities. Air Force Personnel Board panels deliberate in closed sessions and each case is presented by an analyst. A panel president (the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Director, Deputy Director, or a designated representative) presides over the proceedings. The panel reviews cases based on the evidence in the record; it is not an investigative body. Although panel members may rely on their knowledge and experience to inform the deliberations, such knowledge and experience are not evidence. Panel members' individual votes are collected by the analyst and provided as a recommendation to the decision authority (Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Director or Deputy Director, the Air Force Review Boards Agency Director, SAF/MR, or Secretary of the Air Force, depending on the delegated Secretarial authority for the specific type of case). The panel's actions constitute the actions of the Board.

3.1.4. Types of Air Force Personnel Board Cases. Air Force Personnel Board cases are generally classified into three types: legal/adverse action cases, medical/disability appeal cases, and individual voluntary applications/personnel cases. All three types of cases normally originate at the affected service member's functional level where he/she is assigned and undergo review at various higher levels in the member's chain of command, with each successive level having the opportunity to make a recommendation to the board. The board makes a recommendation to the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Director or Deputy Director, the Air Force Review Boards Agency Director, SAF/MR, or Secretary of the Air Force, depending on the delegated Secretarial authority for the specific type of case.

3.1.4.1. Legal Cases. Legal cases typically involve officer and enlisted adverse actions based on substantiated or alleged misconduct or unsatisfactory performance that require a determination as to the service member's continued service and/or the characterization of that service. Common cases involving officers include involuntary separations, officer grade determinations, and resignations/retirements in-lieu of court-martial or administrative separation. Common cases involving enlisted

members include lengthy service probation determinations, certain demotion appeal actions, and retirements in lieu of administrative separation or court-martial. Although not an adverse action, applications for conscientious objector status by officers and enlisted members are also processed as legal cases.

3.1.4.2. Medical cases. The board's medical cases result from service members who contest a medical fitness determination and/or disability rating from the Informal or Formal Physical Evaluation Board (IPEB or FPEB) or a line of duty determination from the Air Reserve Component.

3.1.4.3. Dual Action Cases. Dual action cases involve service members with completed and approved medical and involuntary administrative separation actions. In these cases, the Air Force Personnel Board must consider both separation actions and determine which is most appropriate, based on the facts and circumstances presented. There are two analysts (medical and legal) assigned to these cases.

3.1.4.4. Personnel Cases. Personnel cases include mandatory separation date extensions, active duty service commitment waivers for voluntary separations and retirements, interservice transfer requests, enlisted grade determinations, time-in-grade waivers, and enlisted advancement on the retired list actions.

3.2. Air Force Discharge Review Board.

3.2.1. Authority. The Air Force Discharge Review Board considers requests from former Airmen to review their discharges (except those resulting from a general court-martial) within 15 years of the date of discharge, under the provisions set forth in Title 10, United States Code (USC), Section 1553; DoDD 1332.41, *Boards for Correction of Military Records (BCMRs) and Discharge Review Boards (DRBs)*; and DoDI 1332.28, *Discharge Review Board (DRB) Procedures and Standards*.

3.2.2. Composition. The Air Force Discharge Review Board consists of five voting members who are commissioned officers, Government Service civilians, and SNCOs. A panel president (the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Director, Deputy Director, or a designated O-6 or GS-15 representative) presides over the Board. Other Board members may include legal, medical, and personnel advisors, or advisors from the Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard (for cases involving Air Reserve Component applicants, when possible). One or more SNCOs shall serve on boards for former enlisted applicants. In accordance with Title 10, USC, Section 1553, the Board shall include a member who is a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist, or a physician with training on mental health issues/disorders for specific types of cases (e.g., cases involving applicants diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or a diagnosed mental health disorder).

3.2.3. Board Actions/Responsibilities. The Air Force Discharge Review Board may approve a change to one or more of the following aspects of an applicant's discharge: service characterization, narrative reason for separation, or reenlistment eligibility code. It may grant, or deny, in whole or in part, the changes requested by the applicant. The Board may not return an applicant to service or issue a less favorable discharge than what the applicant received at the time of separation. The Board does not grant any "automatic

upgrades;" each case is considered on an individual basis, based on its own merit, and subject to the reasons for granting relief specified in paragraph 2.2.4.

3.2.4. Consideration by the Board. The Air Force Discharge Review Board is not an investigative body and presumes regularity in the conduct of governmental affairs unless there is substantial credible evidence to overcome this presumption. The applicant bears the burden of providing such evidence, and the board will only grant relief if it determines there is sufficient evidence to conclude the applicant's discharge was not proper or equitable in accordance with Enclosure 4 of DoDI 1332.28.

3.2.4.1. The Board's consideration of impropriety is limited to the discharge process itself and shall not include alleged errors or irregularities prior to the discharge proceedings. However, the Board may give equitable consideration to alleged errors or irregularities that occur outside of the discharge process.

3.2.4.2. In accordance with Title 10, USC, Section 1553, the Board reviews applicable cases with liberal consideration (e.g., applicants diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury resulting from a deployment in support of a contingency operation or military sexual trauma).

3.2.4.3. The Board may consider clemency as a basis to grant relief in the case of a dismissal or bad conduct discharge adjudged through a special court-martial. Clemency is an equitable consideration. The Board will consider whether there is good cause to upgrade a service characterization or change the reason for a discharge to an administrative separation, rather than a punitive separation.

3.2.5. Board Types. Discharge review boards can be completed through a records-only review or a personal appearance; DoDI 1332.28, Section E3.2. outlines the conduct of the reviews. For personal appearances, applicants may request to appear in person at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, or by video teleconference, or other authorized means, from a designated geographically separated location.

3.2.6. Application Procedures. Discharge reviews by the Air Force Discharge Review Board are requested through the submission of a DD Form 293, *Application for the Review of Discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States*. The form can be obtained at: www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/forms/dd/dd0293.pdf. Additional information is available at: <http://www.afpc.af.mil/Separation/Discharge-Review-Board/>.

3.2.7. Appeal Procedures. Disapproved discharge upgrade requests may be appealed through an application to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR). Additional information can be found in AFI 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR)*.

3.3. Air Force Decorations Board.

3.3.1. Authority. The Air Force Decorations Board recommends approval, disapproval, or upgrade/downgrade of nominations to the Secretary of the Air Force and acts as the delegated approval authority on high-level individual peacetime and valor awards. These awards range from the Airman's Medal to the Congressional Medal of Honor. The Board also considers certain unit and non-government civilian awards. The Board exercises

authority delegated to SAF/MR in Headquarters Air Force Mission Directive 1-24, *Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)*, and pursuant to authorities and procedures described in AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Military Awards and Decorations Program* and AFI 36-1004, *The Air Force Civilian Recognition Program*.

3.3.2. Composition. The Secretary of the Air Force has directed the SAF/IG (or Deputy IG) to preside over the Air Force Decorations Board. The Board generally includes three members: the Board President (SAF/IG or Deputy), the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Director or Deputy Director, and the Chief of the Air Force Decorations Board. For valor awards, the Air Force Decorations Board is comprised of five members, including field grade officers, SNCOs (for enlisted nomination packages), and senior Government Service civilian employees (GS-14/GS-15), who provide the perspective of recent and relevant combat and unit experience.

3.3.3. Board Actions/Responsibilities. The Air Force Decorations Board actions and responsibilities are specifically defined in AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Military Awards and Decorations Program* and AFI 36-1004, *The Air Force Civilian Recognition Program*.

4. Appeal Process for Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council Decisions . Under delegated authorities, determinations of Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council component boards are final. Further appeals of these decisions can be pursued through application to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records. Additional information can be found in AFI 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR)*.

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Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

DoDD 1332.41, *Boards for Correction of Military Records (BCMRs) and Discharge Review Boards (DRBs)*, 8 March 2004

AFPD 36-25, *Military Promotion and Demotion*, 7 May 2014

AFPD 36-28, *Awards and Decorations Programs*, 26 April 2016

AFPD 36-32, *Military Retirements and Separations*, 12 May 2014

AFMD 43, *Air Force Review Boards Agency*, 15 October 2015

HAFMD 1-24, *Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)*, 15 December 2008

AFI 36-8101, *Total Force Human Resource Management (HRM) Domain Governance*, 4 December 2013

AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, 1 March 2008

AFI 51-602, *Boards of Officers*, 13 April 2017

Title 10 U.S.C., Section 1553, *Review of Discharge or Dismissal*

DoDI 1332.28, *Discharge Review Board (DRB) Procedures and Standards*, 4 April 2004

AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Military Awards and Decorations Program*, 18 December 2013

AFI 36-1004, *The Air Force Civilian Recognition Program*, 29 August 2016

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFI— Air Force Instruction

AFMAN—Air Force Manual

AFMD—Air Force Mission Directive

AFMOA —Air Force Medical Operations Agency

AFMSA —Air Force Medical Support Agency

AFPC—Air Force Personnel Center

AFPD— Air Force Policy Directive

AFR—Air Force Reserve

AFRBA—Air Force Review Boards Agency

ANG—Air National Guard

ARPC—Air Reserve Personnel Center

DoD—Department of Defense

DoDD— Department of Defense Directive

DoDI—Department of Defense Instruction

HAFMD—Headquarters Air Force Mission Directive

MAJCOM—Major Command

NGB—National Guard Bureau

RegAF—Regular Air Force

SecAF—Secretary of the Air Force

SAFPC—Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council

SNCO—Senior Noncommissioned Officer

USC—United States Code

Terms

Conscientious Objection — A firm, fixed, and sincere objection to participation in war in any form or the bearing of arms, by reason of religious training and/or belief.

Conscientious Objector - Class 1-O—A member who, by reason of conscientious objection, sincerely objects to participation in military service of any kind in war in any form. **Class 1-A-O.** A member who, by reason of conscientious objection, sincerely objects to participation as a combatant in war in any form, but whose convictions are such as to permit military service in a noncombatant status.

Interservice Transfer —The act of transferring from one branch of military service to another. For example, transferring from the Air Force to the Navy.

Line of Duty Determination —A determination as to whether an injury, illness, or disease of a service member performing military duty was incurred in a duty status.

Quasi—judicial - Having a partly judicial character by possession of the right to hold hearings on and conduct investigations into disputed claims and alleged infractions of rules and regulations and to make decisions in the general manner of courts.

Quorum —The number and type of board members required to conduct an official board.

Recoupment —The act of taking back funds that were previously paid when the terms under which they were paid were not fulfilled.

Recusal —The act of disqualifying oneself from serving on a board or panel in order to avoid a conflict of interest of the possible perception of one.

Service Characterization —A categorization that describes the manner in which a service member served. The most common service characterizations are Honorable, Under Honorable Conditions (General), and Under Other Than Honorable Conditions.